

United Nations

Press Release

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Security Council holds consultations to discuss procedures for election of new Secretary-General; would also discuss requests by Member States for urgent meeting to address "deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia".
- ◆ Pledging Conference is held at Headquarters to help Soviet republics mitigate consequences of Chernobyl nuclear accident.
- ◆ General Assembly approves 144-item agenda for forty-sixth session, including new item on necessity to end United States embargo against Cuba.

The Security Council met in consultations this afternoon to discuss the procedures for the election of the successor to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, whose current five-year term expires at the end of this year.

After the meeting, the President of the Council, Jean-Bernard Merimee (France), issued the following statement: "The members of the Council have already started their consultations on the procedure for the election of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It is their intention to start the process of the election itself at the beginning of October, with a view to finalizing it as quickly as possible."

Speaking to correspondents before the meeting, the President said that he would begin consulting Council members on what decision to take about possible action of the Council on the situation in Yugoslavia.

Also speaking to the press, David Hannay, United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the United Nations, said that bearing in mind that the European Economic Community (EEC) had long been working for a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav problem, the objective of the Council consultations would be not to have two competing ways of dealing with the problem, but to have one single way. He stressed that the Council's action must be "preventative" in order to ensure that negotiations to bring about a cease-fire would begin as soon as possible .

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The consultations followed requests by Canada and other States for an urgent meeting of the Council. In its letter requesting the meeting, Canada referred to what it called the "deteriorating situation in Yugoslavia, the continuation of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security". The letter, which was transmitted by the Canadian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, L. Yves Fortier, was addressed to the Secretary-General and dated 19 September.

The Canadian Government's request for a Council meeting has been followed by similar requests by a number of countries including Austria, Australia and Hungary.

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A pledging conference to mobilize support and assistance to Byelorussia, Ukraine and Russia -- the Soviet republics worst affected by the Chernobyl accident, took place today at Headquarters.

Pledges were being sought by United Nations humanitarian agencies to help mitigate the consequences of the nuclear accident that occurred on 26 April 1986 in the Ukrainian town of Chernobyl.

At a press conference yesterday, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Margaret Anstee, who is also Coordinator for United Nations activities relating to the Chernobyl accident, said the United Nations had been involved in addressing the consequences of the disaster from the outset.

She said the accident had been characterized by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as the largest short-term release of a single source of radioactive material ever. According to the Agency, at least 1 million people were living in contaminated regions.

The pledging conference is seeking funds for 131 relief projects, which would require \$646 million in addition to the funds which have been made available locally. The projects address health, resettlement, economic and social rehabilitation, food, agriculture, environmental clean up and the lessons to be learned from the Chernobyl experience.

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The General Assembly this morning approved a 144-item agenda for its forty-sixth session. It included a new item on the necessity of ending the United States economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

That and two other new agenda items approved by the Assembly -- observer status for the Caribbean Community in the General Assembly, and strengthening of the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance -- will be considered directly in plenary. A fourth new item, exploitation of the environment as a weapon in times of armed conflict, was allocated for consideration in the Sixth Committee (Legal).

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As in previous years, the allocation of item 45, on the question of Cyprus, was deferred until an appropriate time during the session.

The Assembly's general debate is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. on Monday, 23 September, and end on Thursday, 10 October. The President of Brazil will deliver the first address, followed by the President of El Salvador, the representative of Iceland, the Foreign Minister of Burkina Faso, the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the President of the United States.

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